

LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF WYOMING
LARAMIE



10M—FORM 46-A—38402

LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
LARAMIE

WITHDRAWN

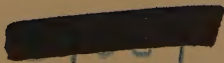
George Library

22

THE BEN GREET SHAKESPEARE

FOR YOUNG READERS AND AMATEUR PLAYERS

Fourpin
O arman
Shakespeare



to



DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

"Me thinks you are my glass, and not my brother"

A FEW GENERAL RULES OR CUSTOMS OF ACTING

THE letters *R* and *L* indicate the position of players on the stage facing the audience. *R* 1, *L* 1 are the entrances nearest the front. *Go up* means from the audience; *go down* is toward the audience. *R C* is the right side of the centre, — and so forth.

When the characters enter, the person speaking generally comes second.

Do not huddle together; do not stand in lines; and do not get in such angles that you cannot be seen by the sides of an audience.

Stand still — keep the leg nearest the audience back, gesticulate seldom and with the hand farthest from the audience. Do not point to your chest or heart when you say *I*, *my* and *mine*, nor to your neighbor when saying *thou*, *thy*, and *thine*, unless absolutely necessary.

Try to reverse the usual acting of the present day and eliminate the personal pronoun

as far as possible (Shakespeare does it all the time). Occasionally the pointing gesture is necessary — but seldom.

Do not try to say more than six words, or at most eight, in one breath. Careful punctuation and accent are harmonious and necessary. Whatever you do, sound the last two or three words of the line or sentence: dropping the voice is the worst fault of our best actors. Do not speak to your audience or at your audience, but with your fellow actors, remembering, of course, that you have invisible listeners, and that the last man in the house wants to hear and see.

Do not imitate our star actors. Try to be natural, spontaneous, and original. At the same time, keep control of yourself and your emotions. To appear to be, and not really to be the character you are acting, is, perhaps, the perfection of the art.

Don't fidget your hands and feet — forget them, and let them be where the good Lord has placed them.

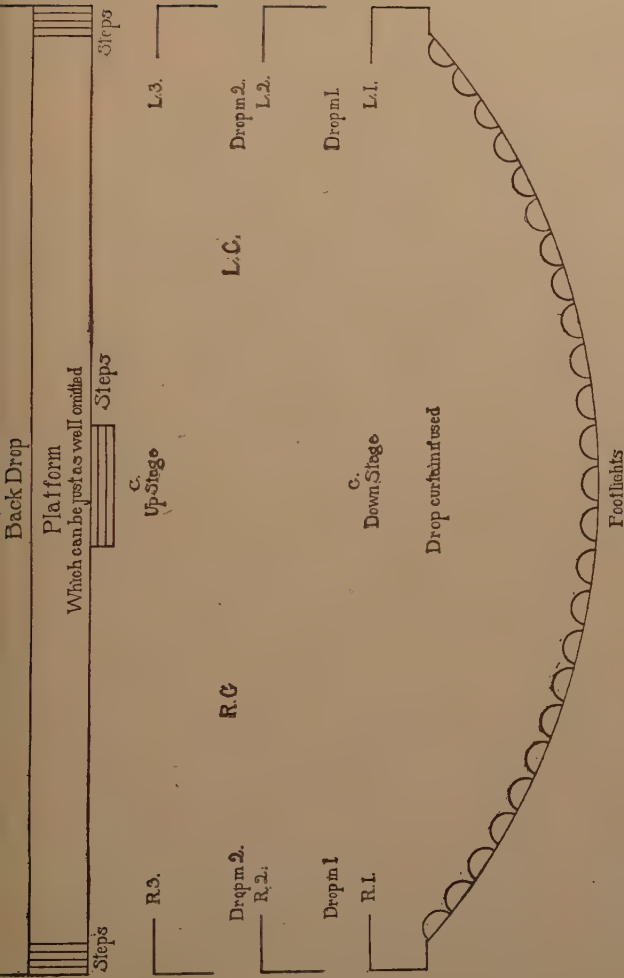
These few hints will be useful for all plays. I shall give more intimate notes as we go along.

The diagrams show the positions, entrances, etc.

The plays are cut to the length of an ordinary performance. Lines can be restored or further cut, if desirable, always remembering that a play given on what we will always call the Shakespeare stage should be given more rapidly, with no pauses between scenes or between entrances and exits, and with possibly only one intermission (of perhaps five minutes), as near as possible halfway through; and most of the plays can be acted in their entirety in about three hours, some of them in much less time — one or two of them take much more. If we cannot quite reduce ours to the happy medium of two hours, we must get as near it as possible. It is better to send your friends away wanting more, than to have them go home yawning! This is a word to the wise.

As to stage setting, it can be done in lots of ways: with scenery, or with screens, or curtains, or in the open air. Strange as it may appear, the plays of Shakespeare are equally effective whichever way we may choose to give them. I imagine most good plays will bear that test.

Remember that Shakespeare is the most perfect English. Do not imitate some of those professors, especially teachers of what is called Elocution and Expression, if by any chance they happen to pronounce it in up-to-date American or cockney British, or tell you it was conceived in any other brogue, accent, or pronunciation than the purest of pure English. There are a few mistakes in his plays, and some printer's errors, about which volumes have been written. Study the humanity, the heart, the English of Shakespeare, as of the Bible — those two wonderful Books of the same generation — the one splendidly revised and perfected by many scholars, the other produced in a state of nature and yet almost perfect — study them, my young friends, inwardly digest your Bible and outwardly demonstrate your Shakespeare: you will then start in life pretty well equipped.



The space between the footlights and drop or folding curtain can be reduced to any dimension.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SOLINUS, *duke of Ephesus*

ÆGEON, *a merchant of Syracuse.*

ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus,	}	<i>twin brothers and sons to Ægeon and Emilia.</i>
ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse,		

DROMIO of Ephesus,	}	<i>twin brothers, and attendants, on the two Antipholuses.</i>
DROMIO of Syracuse,		

BALTHAZAR, *a merchant.*

ANGELO, *a goldsmith.*

First Merchant, *friend to Antipholus of Syracuse.*

Second Merchant, *to whom Angelo is a debtor.*

PINCH, *a magician.*

ÆMILIA, *wife to Ægeon, an Abbess at Ephesus.*

ADRIANA, *wife to Antipholus of Ephesus.*

LUCIANA, *her sister.*

LUCE, *servant to Adriana.*

PHRYNE.

Gaoler, Officers, and other Attendants.

This charming little comedy written after the style of a Latin play (as "The Winter's Tale" is partly founded on the Greek), is one of the first plays written by Shakespeare. The scene needs no change and the action is continuous, being contained in the time occupied with the events of the play, called by some "the unities of time, and place." It is simplicity itself, and yet so well constructed, that the events seem the climax of an eventful day in the life of a family.

This play can be acted in the same scene all through if desired. It can be a public place with an indication of Greek porticos, right, centre, and left. The house on the R is the Phœnix and could have a small design over the door. The centre would be the Abbey, and could have a small Greek design over it. On the left is the sign of the Porcupine; or, a general exit leading into the city. At the opening the Duke would be discovered, or would be proceeding through the city with Ægeon, who is bound either in cords or in chains,

with a soldier preceding and following, and several attendants of the Duke. An officer would affix to one of the buildings, that on the L for choice, a parchment stating the cause of the merchant's detention. It would not be removed till almost the end of the play.

A distant bell or gong might be sounded at long intervals during the scene to give an atmosphere of solemnity.

The Duke's speech is long and wants precision, but variety of tone; it is the prologue and must be retained. The long descriptive narratives of Ægeon are so picturesque and virile that, with the abridgment, they are most interesting and should be given to the best actor of your company.

ACT I

SCENE I. *A Public Place in Ephesus.*

Enter DUKE, ÆGEON, Gaoler, Officers and *other*
Attendants.

Æge. (C). Proceed, Solinus, to procure my
fall,

And by the doom of death end woes and all.

Duke. (R C). Merchant of Syracuse, plead
no more;

I am not partial to infringe our laws:

The enmity and discord which of late

Sprung from the rancorous outrage of your duke

To merchants, our well-dealing countrymen,

Who, wanting guilders to redeem their lives,

Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their
bloods,

Excludes all pity from our threatening looks.

For, since the mortal and intestine jars

'Twixt thy seditious countrymen and us,

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

It hath in solemn synods been decreed,
Both by the Syracusians and ourselves,
To admit no traffic to our adverse towns:
Nay, more,
If any born at Ephesus be seen
At any Syracusian marts and fairs;
Again: if any Syracusian born
Come to the bay of Ephesus, he dies,
His goods confiscate to the duke's dispose;
Unless a thousand marks be levied,
To quit the penalty and to ransom him.
Thy substance, valued at the highest rate,
Cannot amount unto a hundred marks;
Therefore by law thou art condemn'd to die.
Æge. Yet this my comfort: when your words
are done, (*Sits on seat R C.*)
My woes end likewise with the evening sun.

Duke. Well, Syracusian, say, in brief, the
cause (*Sits on seat R C.*)
Why thou departed'st from thy native home,
And for what cause thou camest to Ephesus.

Æge. A heavier task could not have been
imposed
Than I to speak my griefs unspeakable:

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

In Syracuse was I born: and wed
Unto a woman, happy but for me.
With her I lived in joy; our wealth increased
By prosperous voyages I often made
To Epidamnum;
There had she not been long but she became
A joyful mother of two goodly sons;
And, which was strange, the one so like the other
As could not be distinguish'd but by names.
That very hour, and in the selfsame inn,
A meaner woman was delivered
Of such a burthen, male twins, both alike:
Those, for their parents were exceeding poor,
I bought, and brought up to attend my sons.
A league from Epidamnum had we sail'd,
Before the always-wind-obeying deep
Gave any tragic instance of our harm:
The sailors sought for safety by our boat,
And left the ship, then sinking-ripe, to us:
My wife, more careful for the latter-born,
Had fasten'd him unto a small spare mast,
Such as seafaring men provide for storms;
To him one of the other twins was bound,
Whilst I had been like heedful of the other:
The children thus disposed, my wife and I,

¹*Toward is pronounced as a monosyllable.*

²*Ægeon here breaks down and there is a slight pause.*

³*Ægeon summons all his strength to complete the story. He should not be tottery, but a fine, virile old hero, handsome and sympathetic.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Fasten'd ourselves at either end the mast;
And floating straight, obedient to the stream,
Was carrièd toward¹ Corinth, as we thought.
At length the sun
Dispersed those vapours that offended us;
And we discovered two ships from far making
 amain to us,
Of Corinth that, of Epidaurus this:
But ere they came — O, let me say no more!
Gather the sequel by that went before.²

Duke. Nay, forward, old man; do not break
 off so;

For we may pity, though not pardon thee.

*Æge.*³ O, had the gods done so, I had not now
Worthily term'd them merciless to us!
For, ere the ships could meet by twice five
 leagues,

We were encounter d by a mighty rock;
Which being violently borne upon,
Our helpful ship was splitted in the midst;
And in our sight they three were taken up
By fishermen of Corinth, as we thought.
Thus have you heard me sever'd from my bliss;
That by misfortunes was my life prolong'd,
To tell sad stories of my own mishaps.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Duke. And, for the sake of them thou sorrowest for,

Do me the favour to dilate at full

What hath befall'n of them and thee till now.

Æge. My youngest boy, and yet my eldest care,

At eighteen years became inquisitive

After his brother: and importuned me

That his attendant — so his case was like,

Reft of his brother, but retain'd his name —

Might bear him company in the quest of him:

Five summers have I spent in farthest Greece,

Roaming clean through the bounds of Asia,

And, coasting homeward, came to Ephesus;

Hopeless to find, yet loath to leave unsought

Or that, or any place that harbours men.

But here must end the story of my life;

And happy were I in my timely death,

Could all my travels warrant me they live.

Duke. Hapless Ægeon, whom the Fates have
mark'd (*Rises*)

To bear the extremity of dire mishap!

Now, trust me, were it not against our laws,

Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,

My soul should sue as advocate for thee.

¹*Solinus goes off R with attendants; the gaoler and two soldiers move off with Ægeon R; the bell tolls again till they are well off; then the action of the play proceeds spiritedly.*

²*He goes up and looks at the parchment nailed to the L C building, pointing to it.*

³*Antipholus takes a bag from the merchant and gives it to Dromio; crosses to C. Merchant crosses to R. Dromio is L C.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Therefore, merchant, I'll limit thee this day
To seek thy help by beneficial help:
Try all the friends thou hast in Ephesus;
Beg thou, or borrow, to make up the sum,
And live; if no, then thou art doom'd to die.
Gaoler, take him to thy custody.¹

Æge. Hopeless and helpless doth *Ægeon*
 wend,
But to procrastinate his lifeless end.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter ANTIPHOLUS (1) of Syracuse, DROMIO (2)
of Syracuse, and First Merchant (3) *from L.*

First Mer. (C). Therefore give out you are
 of Epidamnum,
Lest that your goods too soon be confiscate.
This very day a Syracusian merchant²
Is apprehended for arrival here;
And, not being able to buy out his life,
According to the statute of the town,
Dies ere the weary sun set in the west.
There is your money that I had to keep.

→ *Ant. S.³ (R C).* Go bear it to the Centaur,
 where we host, [*Crosses to C.*
And stay there, Dromio, till I come to thee.

¹ *Crosses to L, then up L.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Within this hour it will be dinner-time:
Till that, I'll view the manners of the town,
Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings,
And then return, and sleep within mine inn;
For with long travel I am stiff and weary.
Get thee away. [*Goes up to read parchment L C.*

Dro. S. (L C). Many a man would take
you at your word,
And go indeed, having so good a mean.

[*Exit L.*

Ant. S. (C). A trusty villain, sir; that very oft,
When I am dull with care and melancholy,
Lightens my humour with his merry jests.
What, will you walk with me about the town,
And then go to my inn, and dine with me?

First Mer. (R C). I am invited, sir, to certain merchants,
Of whom I hope to make much benefit;
I crave your pardon.¹ Soon at five o'clock,
Please you, I'll meet with you upon the mart,
And afterward consort you till bed-time:
My present business calls me from you now.

[*Crosses to L.*

Ant. S. Farewell till then: I will go lose
myself,

¹*Antipholus stays up C; continues reading the parchment; he seems fascinated by it.*

²*He here finishes the reading and is interrupted by Dromio, who comes on at L and fusses; Antipholus goes down to R C.*

³*The Dromios should speak rather slowly, as their brains and flow of language are not so ample as their masters.'*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

And wander up and down to view the city.

*First Mer.*¹ Sir, I commend you to your
own content. [Exit L.

Ant. S. He that commends me to mine own
content

Commends me to the thing I cannot get.

I to the world am like a drop of water,

That in the ocean seeks another drop;

Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,

Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself;

So I, to find a mother and a brother,

In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself.²

Enter DROMIO of Ephesus.

Here comes the almanac of my true date.

What now? how chance thou art return'd so soon?

*Dro. E.*³ (*L C*). Return'd so soon! rather ap-
proach'd too late:

The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit;

The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell;

My mistress made it one upon my cheek:

She is so hot, because the meat is cold;

The meat is cold, because you come not home;

You come not home, because you have no
stomach;

¹*Getting a little angry.*

²*Laughing it off — a big “Oh!”*

³*Comes right up to Dromio.*

⁴*Dromio taking it humorously.*

⁵*Clapping his hands to express emphasis.*

⁶*In blank amazement.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

You have no stomach, having broke your fast;
But we, that know what 'tis to fast and pray,
Are penitent for your default to-day.

*Ant. S.*¹ Stop in your wind, sir: tell me this,
I pray:

Where have you left the money that I gave you?

*Dro. E.*² O,—sixpence, that I had o' Wednesday last

To pay the saddler for my mistress' crupper?
The saddler had it, sir; I kept it not.

*Ant. S.*³ I am not in a sportive humour now:
Tell me, and dally not, where is the money?
We being strangers here, how darest thou trust
So great a charge from thine own custody?

*Dro. E.*⁴ I pray you, jest, sir, as you sit
at dinner:

I from my mistress come to you in post;
If I return, I shall be post indeed,
For she will score your fault upon my pate.

Ant. S. Come, Dromio, come, these jests
are out of season;

Reserve them till a merrier hour than this.

Where⁵ is the gold I gave in charge to thee?

*Dro. E.*⁶ To me, sir? why, you gave no
gold to me.

¹*Approaching him threateningly.*

²*Dromio, of course, answers in blank amazement.*

³*Pointing to house at R; make use of the gesture to explain to the audience.*

⁴*Clapping his hands to express the emphasis.*

⁵*Dromio rubs himself, his head, elbows, etc.*

⁶*Expressing this with a threatening gesture of the right hand.*

⁷*Still pointing to the Phoenix.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

*Ant. S.*¹ Come on, sir knave, have done your foolishness,

And tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge.

Dro. E. My charge was but to fetch you from the mart

Home to your house,² the Phoenix, sir, to dinner: My mistress and her sister stays for you.³

Ant. S. Now, as I am a Christian, answer me, In what safe place you have bestow'd my money; Or I shall break that merry sconce of yours, That stands on tricks when I am undisposed: Where is the thousand marks thou had'st of me?⁴

*Dro. E.*⁵ I have some marks of yours upon my pate,

Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders; But not a thousand marks between you both.

If I should pay your worship those again,
Perchance you will not bear them patiently.⁶

Ant. S. (*Coming C to him, threateningly.*) Thy mistress' marks? what mistress, slave, hast thou?

*Dro. E.*⁷ Your worship's wife, my mistress *there*
at the Phoenix; *cut*.

She that doth fast till you come home to dinner, And prays that you will hie you home to dinner.



Luciana

¹*He hits him, driving him round; then up to L.*

²*Dromio makes a dash and runs off L.*

³*Goes up to L.*

Note.— Always move to the exit place a line or so before actually going off stage.

⁴*Luciana comes first out of house R, crossing to L, looking about; Adriana follows quite agitated.*

⁵*Adriana sits on seat R C, stamping her foot.*



Adriana

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

*Ant. S.*¹ What, wilt thou flout me thus unto
my face,

Being forbid? There, take you that, sir knave.

Dro. E. What mean you, sir? for God's
sake, hold your hands!

Nay, an you will not, sir, I'll take my heels.

[*Exit L.*²

Ant. S. (C). Upon my life, by some device
or other

The villain is o'er-raught of all my money.

They say this town is full of cozenage;

If it prove so, I will be gone the sooner.

I'll to the Centaur,³ to go seek this slave:

I greatly fear my money is not safe.

[*Exit L* 3.

*Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA*⁴ *R.*

*Adr. (R).*⁵ Neither my husband nor the slave
return'd,

That in such haste I sent to seek his master!

Sure, Luciana, it is two o'clock.

Luc. (L). Perhaps some merchant hath in-
vited him,

And from the mart he's somewhere gone to
dinner.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

V Good sister, let us dine, and never fret:

A man is master of his liberty:

Time is their master; and when they see
time,

They'll go or come: if so, be patient, sister.

Adr. Why should their liberty than ours be
more?

Luc. Because their business still lies out o'
door.

Adr. Look, when I serve him so, he takes
it ill.

Luc. O, know he is the bridle of your will.

Adr. There's none but asses will be bridled
so.

Luc. Why, headstrong liberty is lash'd with
woe.

There's nothing situate under heaven's eye
But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky:
The beasts, the fishes, and the winged fowls
Are their males' subjects and at their controls:
Men more divine, the masters of all these,
Lords of the wide world and wild watery seas.

Adr. But, were you wedded, you would bear
some sway.

Luc. Ere I learn love, I'll practise to obey. >

¹*She rises and goes R, then up stage, then down by the time Dromio appears.*

²*Dromio appears distracted at L; sees the women and goes down L; Luciana up C.*

³*Luciana remains up C as if still looking out for her brother.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Adr. How if your husband start some other where?

Luc. Till he come home again, I would forbear.

*Adr.*¹ Patience unmoved! no marvel though she pause;

They can be meek that have no other cause.

Luc. Well, I will marry one day, but to try. Here comes your man²; now is your husband nigh.

Enter DROMIO of Ephesus.

Adr. (R). Say, is your tardy master now at hand?

Dro. E (L). Nay, he's at two hands with me, and that my two ears can witness.

Adr. Say, didst thou speak with him? know'st thou his mind?

Dro. E. Ay, ay, he told his mind upon mine ear:

Beshrew his hand, I scarce could understand it.

*Luc.*³ Spake he so doubtfully, thou couldst not feel his meaning?

Dro. E. Nay, he struck so plainly, I could too well feel his blows; and withal so

¹*Dromio crosses to C; Luciana comes down horrified; the women are both horrified, reiterating the word "mad."*

²*Dromio keeps on turning to the women. After each sentence he says: "My gold, quoth he," each time to Luciana with an imitation of Antipholus's manner.*

³*Adriana is furious at this; Luciana is frightened. It seems he must be mad.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

doubtfully, that I could scarce understand them.

Adr. But say, I prithee, is he coming home? It seems he hath great care to please his wife.

*Dro. E.*¹ Why, mistress, sure my master is gone mad.

Adr. Gone mad, you villain!

Dro. E. Sure he is gone mad!

When I desired him to come home to dinner,
He ask'd me for a thousand marks in gold:

"'Tis dinner-time," quoth I; "My gold!" quoth he:²

"Your meat doth burn," quoth I; "My gold!" quoth he:

"Will you come home?" quoth I; "My gold!" quoth he,

"Where is the thousand marks I gave thee, villain?"

"The pig," quoth I, "is burn'd;" "My gold!" quoth he:

"My mistress, sir," quoth I; "Hang up thy mistress!

I know not thy mistress; out on thy mistress!"

*Luc.*³ Quoth who?

Dro. E. Quoth my master:

¹*Adriana almost uses her nails here.*

²*Dromio makes a grotesque appeal to them both to let him off. Luciana and Adriana both make determined gestures that he has to go. Luciana goes up stage.*

³*Dromio goes up to L; Adriana follows him up, and practically rolls him round and off, as he illustrates playing the game of foot ball with his feet and hands.*

⁴*Luciana comes down to Adriana, who sits exhausted and angry on the seat R C.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

"I know," quoth he, "no house, no wife, no
mistress."

*Adr.*¹ Go back again, thou slave, and fetch
him home.

*Dro. E.*² Go back again, and be new beaten
home?

I prithee send some other messenger.

Adr. Back, slave, or I will break thy pate
across.

Dro. E. And he will bless that cross with
other beating:

Between you I shall have a holy head.³

Adr. Hence, prating peasant! fetch thy
master home.

Dro. E. Am I so round with you as you with
me,

That like a football you do spurn me thus?

You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither:

If I last in this service, you must case me in
leather. [*Exit L.*

*Luc.*⁴ Fie, how impatience loureth in your
face!

Adr. His company must do his minions grace,
Whilst I at home starve for a merry look.
Hath homely age the alluring beauty took

¹*Adriana rises and moves impatiently across, and up and down the stage, Luciana trying to console her.*

²*Here she weeps and goes up to house R; Luciana follows laughing, for she believes in her brother, and is sure all will come right.*

³  *Slight pause.*

⁴*Antipholus enters L, looks around, then goes down C to R.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

From my poor cheek? then he hath wasted it:
Are my discourses dull? barren my wit?
If voluble and sharp discourse she marr'd,
Unkindness blunts it more than marble hard:

Luc. (*L C*). Self-harming jealousy! fie, beat
it hence!

*Adr.*¹ (*R C*). Unfeeling fools can with such
wrongs dispense.

I know nis eye doth homage elsewhere;
Or else what lets it but he would be here?
Sister, you know he promised me a chain;
Would that alone, alone he would detain.
Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,
I'll weep² what's left away, and weeping die.

Luc. How many fond fools serve mad jeal-
ousy!

[*Exeunt into house R, laughing.* ◡³

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse from L.

—*Ant. S.*⁴ The gold I gave to Dromio is laid
up

Safe at the Centaur; and the heedful slave
Is wander'd forth, in care to seek me out
By computation and mine host's report.
I could not speak with Dromio since at first

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

I sent him from the mart. See, here he comes. (*Remains R C.*)

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse from L.

How now, sir! is your merry humour alter'd?
As you love strokes, so jest with me again.
You know no Centaur? you received no gold?
Your mistress sent to have me home to dinner?
My house was at the Phoenix? Wast thou mad,
That thus so madly thou didst answer me?

Dro. S. What answer, sir? when spake I
such a word?

Ant. S. Even now, even here, not half an
hour since.

Dro. S. I did not see you since you sent me
hence,
Home to the Centaur, with the gold you gave
me.

Ant. S. Villain, thou didst deny the gold's
receipt,

And told'st me of a mistress and a dinner;
For which, I hope, thou felt'st I was dis-
pleased.

Dro. S. I am glad to see you in this merry
vein:

¹*He exactly repeats the business of beating, but this Dromio, being his man, has to stand it.*

²*Having beaten him, he sits down R C.*

³*Rubbing his head.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

What means this jest? I pray you, master,
tell me.

~~Ant.~~ S.¹ Yea, dost thou jeer and flout me in
the teeth?

Think'st thou I jest? Hold, take thou that,
and that. [Beating him.

Dro. S. Hold, sir, for God's sake! now your
jest is earnest:

Upon what bargain do you give it me?

~~Ant.~~ S.² Because that I familiarly sometimes
Do use you for my fool, and chat with you,
Your sauciness will jest upon my love,
And make a common of my serious hours.
If you will jest with me, know my aspect,
And fashion your demeanour to my looks,
Or I will beat this method in your sconce.

Dro. S.³ Sconce call you it? so you would
leave battering, I had rather have it a head:
an you use these blows long, I must get a sconce
for my head, and insconce it too; or else I shall
seek my wit in my shoulders. But, I pray, sir,
why am I beaten?

~~Ant.~~ S. Dost thou not know?

Dro. S. Nothing, sir, but that I am beaten.

~~Ant.~~ S. Shall I tell you why?

¹*Dromio goes to him C; Antipholus seated R C.*

²*The contrast between master and man is decided. Antipholus should speak lightly and easily; the man is slow and deliberate in his replies.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

*Dro. S.*¹ Ay, sir, and wherefore; for they say every why hath a wherefore.

Ant. S. Why, first — for flouting me; and then, wherefore,—
For urging it the second time to me.

Dro. S. Was there ever any man thus beaten out of season,
When in the why and the wherefore is neither rhyme nor reason?

Well, sir, I thank you.²

Ant. S. Thank me, sir! for what?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.

Ant. S. I'll make you amends next, to give you nothing for something. But say, sir, is it dinner-time?

Dro. S. No, sir: I think the meat wants that I have.

Ant. S. In good time, sir; what's that?

Dro. S. Basting.

Ant. S. Well, sir, then 'twill be dry.

Dro. S. If it be, sir, I pray you, eat none of it.

Ant. S. Your reason?

Dro. S. Lest it make you choleric, and purchase me another dry basting

¹*Antipholus rises and goes L C; Dromio retreats L; at the same time Adriana appears at the door, making signs of delight at the return of her husband, forgetting all her anger at his non-return. Luciana follows at door.*

²*Antipholus L C turns and sees them, Dromio L; they both stand dumfounded; the women both advance very slowly as far as C.*

³*Adriana here throws her arms around Antipholus; Dromio is horrified.*

⁴*Antipholus excuses himself and quickly puts her arms away from him.*

⁵*Antipholus speaks very deliberately, trying to be polite under such awkward circumstances, shrinking all the time toward L C and L. Dromio shrinks also behind his master, down L.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

*Ant. S.*¹ Well, sir, learn to jest in good time:
there's a time for all things.

But soft! who wafts us yonder!

Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA.

*Adr.*² Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and
frown:

Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects;
I am not Adriana nor thy wife.

The time was once when thou unurged wouldst
vow

That never words were music to thine ear,
That never object pleasing in thine eye,
That never touch well welcome to thy hand,
That never meat sweet-savour'd in thy taste,
Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carved
to thee.³

How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,
That thou art then estranged from thyself?

Thyself I call it, being strange to me,

That, undividable, incorporate,

Am better than thy dear self's better part.⁴

Ah, do not tear away thyself from me!

*Ant. S.*⁵ Plead you to me, fair dame? I know
you not:

¹*Luciana R; Adriana R C; Antipholus L C; Dromio L.*

²*Adriana crosses again to C; Luciana goes up C to R.*

³*Luciana comes down to R by Adriana; both women stand amazed with surprise and indignation.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

In Ephesus I am but two hours old,¹
As strange unto your town as to your talk;
Who, every word by all my wit being scann'd,
Wants wit in all one word to understand.

Luc. (Crosses to C.) Fie, brother! how the
world is changed with you!

When were you wont to use my sister thus?
She sent for you by Dromio home to dinner.

Ant. S. By Dromio?

Dro. S. By me?

Adr.² By thee; and this thou didst return
from him.

That he did buffet thee, and, in his blows,
Denied my house for his, me for his wife.

Ant. S. Did you converse, sir, with this
gentlewoman?

What is the course and drift of your compact?

Dro. S. I, sir? I never saw her till this time.³

Ant. S. Villain, thou liest; for even her very
words

Didst thou deliver to me on the mart.

Dro. S. I never spake with her in all my life.

Ant. S. How can she thus then call us by
our names?

Unless it be by inspiration.

¹*She turns to Luciana, sits and weeps.*

²*Antipholus is not sure whether he is sane. After due consideration he thinks at any rate he may get a good dinner; they go down R conversing.*

³*Luciana goes up to the house; Dromio keeps at a comfortable distance down L; Adriana, R C, is still unhappy.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Adr. How ill agrees it with your gravity
To counterfeit thus grossly with your slave,
Abetting him to thwart me in my mood!¹
Be it my wrong you are from me exempt,
But wrong not that wrong with a more contempt.

*Ant. S.*² To me she speaks; she moves me
for her theme:

What, was I married to her in my dream?
Or sleep I now, and think I hear all this?
What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?
Until I know this sure uncertainty,
I'll entertain the offer'd fallacy.

*Luc.*³ Dromio, go bid the servants spread
for dinner.

Dro. S. O, for my beads! I cross me for
a sinner.

This is the fairy land: O spite of spites!
We talk with goblins, owls, and sprites:
If we obey them not, this will ensue,
They'll suck our breath, or pinch us black and
blue.

Luc. Why prate'st thou to thyself, and an-
swer'st not?

Dromio, thou drone, thou snail, thou slug, thou
sot!

¹*Dromio creeps across to his master, who is now C; pulls the corner of his drapery as if uncertain if he were alive or no.*

²*Dromio retreats once more to L.*

³*Luciana is up on steps of house.*

⁴*She rises as if her mind were made up.*

⁵*She goes to Antipholus, takes his hand and leads him up to house. She keeps on turning to speak to Dromio, who starts each time. The speech is made very humorous in accord with the situation; at the end she goes up the steps, Antipholus waiting at the bottom. He slightly wavers, and goes a little down stage to speak. Dromio is still huddling down L; but eventually creeps to house after all have gone in.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

*Dro. S.*¹ I am transformed, master, am not I?

Ant. S. I think thou art in mind, and so am I.

Dro. S. Nay, master, both in mind and in my shape.

Ant. S. Thou hast thine own form.

*Dro. S.*² No, I am an ape.

*Luc.*³ If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an ass.

Dro. S. 'Tis true; she rides me, and I long for grass.

'Tis so, I am an ass; else it could never be
But I should know her as well as she knows me.

*Adr.*⁴ Come, come, no longer will I be a fool,
To put the finger in the eye and weep,
Whilst man and master laughs my woes to scorn.

Come, sir, to dinner.⁵ Dromio, keep the gate.
Husband, I'll dine above with you to-day,
And shrive you of a thousand idle pranks.
Sirrah, if any ask you for your master,
Say he dines forth, and let no creature enter.
Come, sister. Dromio, play the porter well.

Ant. S. Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?
Sleeping or waking? mad or well-advised?
Known unto these, and to myself disguised!

The scene ends in great animation.

Music plays as if within the house.

A short interval.

The music should be quaint, old or even modern Greek. It is obtainable.

The costumes are Greek. Be careful that the twins are exactly alike in costume and of course in appearance. By wearing small beards, moustaches, and wigs alike, also "Phrygian" caps, the similarity is easily managed.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

I'll say as they say, and persevere so,
And in this mist at all adventures go.

Dro. S. Master, shall I be porter at the
gate?

Adr. Ay; and let none enter, lest I break your
pate.

Luc. Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too
late. *[Exeunt into house R.]*



Antipholus of Ephesus

Balthazar and Antipholus come together and go R C and C. Angelo follows, going L C; Dromio carrying a short stick slinks behind L C in the background. He does not want any more "basting."

Opening of the scene is bright, they come on chatting — the music is still playing as if there was a small feast at the house R.

¹He turns C and finds Dromio up stage L C; Dromio goes down warily and slowly. He rubs himself about the arms and shoulders as he describes his beatings. Make the rhymes decided on the last words. Sound the k's strongly.

ACT II

SCENE I. *Before the house of Antipholus of Ephesus.*

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus, DROMIO of Ephesus, ANGELO, and BALTHAZAR from R.

Ant. E. Good Signior Angelo, you must excuse us all;

My wife is shrewish when I keep not hours;
Say that I linger'd with you at your shop
To see the making of her carcanet,
And that to-morrow you will bring it home.
But here's a villain that would face me down¹
He met me on the mart, and that I beat him,
And charged him with a thousand marks in gold,
And that I did deny my wife and house.
Thou drunkard, thou, what didst thou mean
by this?

Dro. E. Say what you will, sir, but I know
what I *know*;

¹*As he says this he turns, spreads out his heels,
and struts up stage C. .*

²*Balthazar has sat down on seat R C.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

That you beat me at the mart, I have your hand
to *show*:

If the skin were parchment, and the blows you
gave were *ink*,

Your own handwriting would tell you what I
think.

Ant. E. I *think* thou art an ass.

Dro. E. Marry, so it doth appear

By the wrongs I suffer, and the blows I bear.

I should kick, being kick'd; and, being at that
pass,

You would keep from my heels, and beware of
an *ass*.¹

Ant. E. You're sad, Signior Balthazar: pray
God our cheer

May answer my good will and your good wel-
come here.²

Bal. I hold your dainties cheap, sir, and your
welcome dear.

Ant. E. O, Signior Balthazar, either at flesh
or fish,

A table full of welcome makes scarce one dainty
dish.

Bal. Good meat, sir, is common: that every
churl affords.

¹*Balthazar rises, goes down R. Dromio goes to door with stick. Antipholus stands C back to audience. Dromio hits something near, such as a post, with his stick; if only canvas, do not touch it. He pauses after each name and wonders why they don't rush to the door and answer. There is a clatter of dishes and plates from inside. The Dromios must try to imitate each other. On hearing Syracuse, Ephesus goes nearly crazy outside the door.*

²*Angelo L, Antipholus C, Dromio R C, Balthazar R.*



Angelo

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Ant. E. And welcome more common; for
that's nothing but words.

Bal. Small cheer and great welcome make
a merry feast.

Ant. E. Ay, to a niggardly host and more
sparing guest:

But, soft! my door is lock'd.— Go bid them let
us in.¹

Dro. E. Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cicely,
Gillian, Ginn!

Dro. S. [*Within*] Mome, malt-horse, capon,
coxcomb, idiot, patch!

Either get thee from the door, or sit down at
the hatch.

Dost thou conjure for wenches, that thou call'st
for such store,

When one is one too many? Go get thee from
the door.

Dro. E. What patch is made our porter?
My master stays in the street.

Dro. S. [*Within*] Let him walk from whence
he came, lest he catch cold on 's
feet.

*Ant. E.*² Who talks within there? ho, open
the door!

¹*Dromio Ephesus drops into seat R C with back to audience as he says "O!" shakes his stick at the voice inside at R.*

²*Luce is the cook, who later appears. She should have a manly voice and a burly appearance.*

³*He offers to lay his stick about them.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Dro. S. [*Within*] Right, sir; I'll tell you when,
an you'll tell me wherefore.

Ant. E. Wherefore? for my dinner: I have
not dined to-day.

Dro. S. [*Within*] Nor to-day here you must
not; come again when you may.

Ant. E. What art thou that keepest me out
from the house I owe?

Dro. S. [*Within*] The porter for this time,
sir, and my name is Dromio.

*Dro.*¹ *E.* O, villain, thou hast stolen both
mine office and my name!

The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle
blame.

If thou hadst been Dromio to-day in my place,
Thou wouldst have changed thy face for a name,
or thy name for an ass.

*Luc.*² [*Within*] What a coil is there, Dromio?
who are those at the gate!

Dro. E. Let my master in, Luce.

Luce. [*Within*] 'Faith, no; he comes too late;
And so tell your master.

*Dro. E.*³ O Lord, I must laugh!

Have at you with a proverb; — Shall I set in
my staff?

¹*Gives Antipholus the stick.*

Be careful of all these rhymes. The voices within the house should be loud.

²*There is still a noise of revelry within: plates, music, pp, etc.; laughter. It all makes the right master very angry; for both he and Dromio are hungry.*

³*Dromio dances with pleasure, keeping time to the words and exits with great glee. Angelo, who is a red-faced, cheery being, short and fat, is hugely amused at all this. The other merchant is more serious and tries to console his friend.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Ant. E. Thou baggage, let me in.

Luce. [*Within*] Can you tell for whose sake?

*Dro. E.*¹ Master, knock the door hard.

Luce. [*Within*] Let him knock till it ache.

Ant. E. You'll cry for this, minion, if I beat the door down.

Luce. [*Within*] What needs all that, and a pair of stocks in the town?

Adr. [*Within*] Who is that at the door that keeps all this noise?

Dro. S. [*Within*] By my troth, your town is troubled with unruly boys.

Ant. E. Are you there, wife? you might have come before.

Adr. [*Within*]² Your wife, sir knave! go get you from the door.

Ant. E. Go fetch me something: I'll break ope the gate.

Dro. S. [*Within*] Break any breaking here, and I'll break your knave's pate.

Ant. E. Well, I'll break in: go borrow me a crow.

*Dro. E.*³ A crow without feather? Master, mean you so?

¹*Antipholus indicated that the Porcupine is on the L of the stage; Antipholus consults with his friend, the merchant, over the trick to make Adriana jealous.*

The end of the scene is bright, all of them laughing at the joke of a man being shut out of his own dwelling. They all go off up L, Antipholus looking back as if he intended to be revenged.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

For a fish without a fin, there's a fowl without
a feather:

If a crow help us in, sirrah, we'll pluck ~~a crow~~
together.

Ant. E. (C). Go get thee gone; fetch me an
iron crow. (*Dromio runs off L.*)

Bal. (R). Have patience, sir: O, let it not be so!
Herein you war against your reputation,
And draw within the compass of suspect
The unviolated honour of your wife.
Be ruled by me: depart in patience,
And let us to the Tiger all to dinner;
And about evening come yourself alone
To know the reason of this strange restraint.

Ant. E. You have prevail'd: I will depart
in quiet,

And, in despite of mirth, mean to be merry.
I know a wench of excellent discourse,
Pretty and witty; wild, and yet, too, gentle:
There will we dine.

[*To Ang.*]¹ Get you home,
And fetch the chain; by this I know 'tis made:
Bring it, I pray you, to the Porpentine;
For there's the house: that chain will I bestow
Be it for nothing but to spite my wife —

¹*Luciana comes first, followed by Antipholus, who is still amazed at the meaning of her words, addressing him as a brother. She crosses to L C. Antipholus remains R C.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Upon mine hostess there: good sir, make haste.
Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me,
I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll dis-
dain me.

Ang. I'll meet you at that place some hour
hence.

Ant. E. Do so. This jest shall cost me some
expense. *[Exeunt L U.]*

Enter LUCIANA, R, with ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse.

Luc. (L C). And may it be that you have
quite forgot

A husband's office? shall, Antipholus,
Even in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot?
Shall love, in building, grow so ruinous?
If you did wed my sister for her wealth,
Then for her wealth's sake use her with more
kindness:

Or if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth;
Muffle your false love with some show of
blindness:

Let not my sister read it in your eye;
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator;
Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty;
Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger;

*¹His ardour makes the scene more humorous,
but the actors must be unconscious of it.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Bear a fair presence, though your heart be
tainted;

Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint;
Be secret-false: what need she be acquainted?

What simple thief brags of his own attain? —
Then, gentle brother, get you in again;

Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife;
'Tis holy sport, to be a little vain,

When the sweet breath of flattery conquers
strife.

Ant. S.¹ (C). Sweet mistress — what your
name is else, I know not,

Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine —
Less in your knowledge and your grace you show
not

Than our earth's wonder; more than earth
divine.

Teach me, dear creature, how to think and
speak;

Lay open to my earthy-gross conceit,
Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,
The folded meaning of your words' deceit.

Against my soul's pure truth why labour you

To make it wander in an unknown field?
Are you a god? would you create me new?

¹*As Antipholus approaches her, she shrinks and crosses to R, as if going to the house.*

²*This speech is very ardent.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Transform me, then, and to your power I'll
yield.

But if that I am I, then well I know

Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,
Far more, far more to you do I decline.¹

Luc. (R C). What, are you mad, that you do
reason so?

Ant. S. Not mad, but mated; how, I do not
know.

Luc. It is a fault that springeth from your
eye.

Ant. S. For gazing on your beams, fair sun,
being by.

Luc. Gaze where you should, and that will
clear your sight.

Ant. S. As good to wink, sweet love, as look
on night.

Luc. (R C.) Why call you me love? call my
sister so.

Ant. S. Thy sister's sister.

—*Luc.* That's my sister.

Ant. S.² (C).

No;

It is thyself, mine own self's better part,
Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer
heart,

¹*As he approaches her she runs up to the house*
R. Luciana seems conscious of some mysterious
mistake.

²*Dromio runs out, after Luciana has entered.*

³*Antipholus sits on seat laughing at Dromio's*
plight.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

My food, my fortune, and my sweet hope's aim,
My sole earth's heaven, and my heaven's claim.

Luc. All this my sister is, or else should be.

Ant. S.¹ Call thyself sister, sweet, for I ~~am~~ *am*
thee.

Thee will I love, and with thee lead my life:
Thou hast no husband yet, nor I no wife.
Give me thy hand.

Luc. (R.) O, soft, sir! hold you still:
I'll fetch my sister, to get her good will.

[Exit R U.]

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse from behind house R.

Ant. S. Why, how now, Dromio!² where
runn'st thou so fast?

Dro. S. (Crosses to L C.) Do you know me,
sir? am I Dromio? am I your man? am I
myself?

Ant. S.³ (R C). Thou art Dromio, thou art
my man, thou art thyself.

Dro. S. I am an ass, I am a woman's man,
and besides myself.

Ant. S. What woman's man? and how be-
sides thyself?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, besides myself, I am

¹*Dromio points to the kitchen entrance behind house R.*

²*Lifting up his foot.*

Antipholus of course, laughs at all Dromio's replies.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

due to a woman; one that claims me, one that haunts me, one that will have me.

Ant. S. What claim lays she to thee?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, such claim as you would lay to your horse; and she would have me as a beast: not that, I being a beast, she would have me; but that she, being a very beastly creature, lays claim to me.

Ant. S. What is she?

Dro. S. A very reverent body; ay, such a one as a man may not speak of, without he say Sir-reverence. I have but lean luck in the match, and yet is she a wondrous fat marriage.

Ant. S. How dost thou mean a fat marriage?

Dro. S.¹ Marry, sir, she's the kitchen-wench, and all grease; and I know not what use to put her to, but to make a lamp of her, and run from her by her own light. I warrant, her rags, and the tallow in them, will burn a Poland winter: if she lives till doomsday, she'll burn a week longer than the whole world. *me*

Ant. S. What complexion is she of?

Dro. S.² Swart, like my shoe, but her face nothing like so clean kept.

Ant. S. That's a fault that water will mend.

¹*Dromio must keep up his slow and deliberate speech. He stands L at C of his master all the time.*

²*The mention of America is curious. He is, of course, referring to that part of it which was discovered over a century previously, mostly by Spaniards and Italians.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Dro. S. No, sir, 'tis in grain; Noah's flood
could not do it.

Ant. S. What's her name?

*Dro. S.*¹ Nell, sir; but her name and three
quarters, that's an ell and three quarters, will
not measure her from hip to hip.

Ant. S. Then she bears some breadth?

Dro. S. No longer from head to foot than
from hip to hip: she is spherical, like a globe;
I could find out countries in her.

Ant. S. Where Scotland?

Dro. S. I found it by the barrenness; hard
in the palm of the hand.

Ant. S. Where France?

Dro. S. In her forehead; armed and reverted,
making war against her heir.

Ant. S. Where England?

Dro. S. I looked for the chalky cliffs, but I
could find no whiteness in them; but I guess it
stood in her chin, by the salt rheum that ran
between France and it.

Ant. S. Where Spain?

Dro. S. 'Faith, I saw it not; but I felt it
hot in her breath.

Ant. S. Where America,² the Indies?

¹*Antipholus rises and has a good laugh, then goes up L and up and down, giving directions. Dromio crosses to R, looks cautiously around at the house R.*

²*Luce, the cook, rushes in from the back of the house, spies Dromio; he runs for his life all around the stage, she after him with her hands covered with flour; as a last resource, finding she cannot catch him, she throws the pudding at him. She then shakes the rolling-pin at him and retires behind house R. Antipholus stands roaring with laughter.*

³*After Luce's exit Dromio hurries off saying his speech.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Dro. S. Oh, sir, upon her nose, all o'er
embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires,
declining their rich aspect to the hot breath of
Spain.

To conclude, this drudge, or diviner, laid claim
to me; called me Dromio; swore I was assured
to her.

I, amazed, ran from her as a witch:
And, I think, if my breast had not been made
of faith, and my heart of steel,
She had transform'd me to a curtal dog, and
made me turn i' the wheel.

[*Crosses to L.*

*Ant. S.*¹ Go hie thee presently, post to the
road:

An if the wind blow any way from shore,
I will not harbour in this town to-night:
If any bark put forth, come to the mart,
Where I will walk till thou return to me.
If every one knows us, and we know none,
'Tis time, I think, to trudge, pack, and be gone.²

*Dro. S.*³ As from a bear a man would run
for life,
So fly I from her that would be my wife.

[*Exit L.*

¹*Antipholus goes C to R and is just turning to leave the house R, when Angelo enters L.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

*Ant. S.*¹ There's none but witches do inhabit here;

And therefore 'tis high time I were hence.

She that doth call me husband, even my soul
Doth for a wife abhor. But her fair sister,
Possess'd with such a gentle sovereign grace,
Of such enchanting presence and discourse,
Hath almost made me traitor to myself:
But, lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,
I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song.

Enter ANGELO with the chain up L.

Ang. Master Antipholus —

Ant. S. Ay, that's my name.

Ang. (L C). I know it well, sir: lo, here is the chain.

I thought to have ta'en you at the Porpentine:
The chain unfinish'd made me stay thus long.

Ant. S (C). What is your will that I shall do with this?

Ang. What please yourself, sir; I have made it for you.

Ant. S. Made it for me, sir! I bespoke it not.

Ang. Not once, nor twice, but twenty times you have.

¹*Angelo points to house R; he has hurried with the chain so that Antipholus might make amends to his wife.*

²*The fussy old merchant thinks he has done a good turn to Antipholus and a good day's work for himself. He goes off roaring with laughter, which is so infectious that Antipholus joins in.*

³*He puts the chain on; looks back at the house R, then decides to go.*

There is another short interval. These intervals can be at the discretion of the manager, remembering always that the action of this play is swift and the continuity of the story is slightly broken if the intermissions are long.

⁴*This merchant can be the same as the first merchant, or even Balthazar, if the available cast is limited.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Go home¹ with it, and please your wife withal;
And soon at supper-time I'll visit you,
And then receive my money for the chain.

Ant. S. I pray you, sir, receive the money
now,

For fear you ne'er see chain nor money more.

Ang. You are a merry man, sir: fare you
well. [*Exit.*²

Ant. S. What I should think of this, I cannot tell:

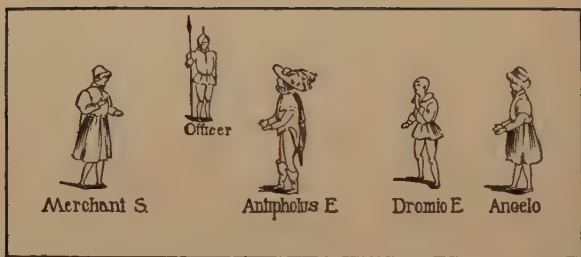
But this I think, there's no man ~~so~~ so vain
That would refuse so fair an offer'd chain.
I see a man here needs not live by shifts,
When in the streets he meets such golden gifts.
I'll to the mart, and there for Dromio stay:
If any ship put out, then straight away.³

[*Exit L.*

INTERVAL

Enter Second Merchant, (1) ANGELO, (2) *and*
an Officer (3) *from L.*

*Sec. Mer.*⁴ (*R C*). You know since Pentecost
the sum is due,
And since I have not much importuned you;
Nor now I had not, but that I am bound



Note.—If the play is given on the “Shakespeare” stage, the costumes should be of that period.

For a scenic stage, Greek costuming is best.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

To Persia, and want guilders for my voyage:
Therefore make present satisfaction,
Or I'll attach you by this officer.

Ang. (L C). Even just the sum that I do
owe to you

Is growing to me by Antipholus;
And in the instant that I met with you
He had of me a chain: at five o'clock
I shall receive the money for the same.
Pleaseth you walk with me down to his house,
I will discharge my bond, and thank you too.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and DROMIO of
Ephesus from Phryne's house L.*

Off. That labour may you save: see where he
comes.

Ant. E. While I go to the goldsmith's house,
go thou

And buy a rope's end: that will I bestow
Among my wife and her confederates,
For locking me out of my doors by day.
But, soft! I see the goldsmith. Get thee gone;
Buy thou a rope, and bring it home to me.

Dro. E. I buy a thousand pound a year:
I buy a rope. *[Exit quickly up L.*

¹*Angelo brings out of his pouch a small parchment with the account of the chain-making, indicating to Antipholus that he owes money to the merchant.*

²*Antipholus wants the goldsmith to take the merchant to his home and get payment.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Ant. E. (C). A man is well help up that trusts to you:

I promised your presence and the chain;
But neither chain nor goldsmith came to me.
Belike you thought our love would last too long,
If it were chain'd together, and therefore came not.

Ang.¹ (L). Saving your merry humour, here's the note

How much your chain weighs to the utmost carat,
The fineness of the gold, and chargeful fashion,
Which doth amount to three odd ducats more
Than I stand debted to this gentleman:

I pray you, see him presently discharged,
For he is bound to sea, and stays but for it.

Ant. E² (C). I am not furnish'd with the present money;

Besides, I have some business in the town.

Good signior, take the stranger to my house,
And with you take the chain, and bid my wife
Disburse the sum on the receipt thereof:

Perchance I will be there as soon as you.

Ang. (L C). Then you will bring the chain to her yourself?

¹*Antipholus and the merchant here get to high words; the scene is very animated.*

²*The merchant and Angelo are very angry and excited; Antipholus looks upon the affair as a joke.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Ant. E. No; bear it with you, lest I come not time enough.

Ang. Well, sir, I will. Have you the chain about you?

Ant. E. An if I have not, sir, I hope you have;

Or else you may return without your money.¹

Ang. Nay, come, I pray you, sir, give me the chain:

Both wind and tide stays for this gentleman,
And I, to blame, have held him here too long.

Ant. E. Good Lord! you use this dalliance to excuse

Your breach of promise to the Porpentine.
I should have chid you for not bringing it,
But, like a shrew, you first begin to brawl.

Sec. Mer. (R). The hour steals on; I pray you, sir, dispatch.

*Ang.*² (*L*). You hear how he importunes me;
— the chain!

Ant. E. (C). Why, give it to my wife, and fetch your money.

Ang. (L). Come, come, you know I gave it you even now.

Either send the chain, or send me by some token.

¹*Angelo here almost strikes Antipholus.*

²*The officer touches Angelo on the shoulder. He staggers and almost dies of indignation, blowing out his cheeks and looking ridiculous.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Ant. E. (C). Fie, now you run this humour
out of breath.

Come, where's the chain? I pray you, let me
see it.

Sec. Mer. R. My business cannot brook this
dalliance.

Good sir, say whether you'll answer me or no:
If not I'll leave him to the officer.

Ant. E. I answer you! what should I answer
you?

Ang.¹ (L). The money that you owe me for
the chain.

Ant. E. I owe you none till I receive the
chain.

Ang. You know I gave it you half an hour
since.

Ant. E. You gave me none: you wrong me
much to say so.

Ang. You wrong me more, sir, in denying it;
Consider how it stands upon my credit.

Sec. Mer. (R). Well, officer, arrest him at
my suit.

Off.² I do; and charge you in the duke's name
to obey me.

Ang. This touches me in reputation.

¹*Angelo, although under arrest, is able to give a coin to the officer, who leaves him, goes Centre and touches the shoulder of Antipholus.*

The situation here is most humorous.

²*The law of arresting people simply under suspicion, is almost as ridiculous here in America, in the present day. This situation might quite easily happen in Boston!*

³*Dromio's slow, deliberate delivery of this speech adds to the humour of the situation. He is very stolid.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Either consent to pay this sum for me,
Or I attach you by this officer.

Ant. E. Consent to pay thee that I never
had!

Arrest me, foolish fellow, if thou darest.

*Ang.*¹ Here is thy fee; arrest him, officer.
I would not spare my brother in this case,
If he should scorn me so apparently.

Off. I do arrest you, sir: you hear the suit.

*Ant. E.*² I do obey thee till I give thee bail.
But, sirrah, you shall buy this sport as dear
As all the metal in your shop will answer.

Ang. Sir, sir, I shall have law in Ephesus,
To your notorious shame; I doubt it not.

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse, from the bay from L.

*Dro. S.*³ Master, there is a bark of Epidam-
num

That stays but till her owner comes aboard,
And then, sir, she bears away. Our fraughtage,
sir,

I have convey'd aboard; and I have bought
The oil, the balsamum, and aqua-vitæ.
The ship is in her trim; the merry wind
Blows fair from land: they stay for nought at all
But for their owner, master, and yourself.

¹*Antipholus goes off with Angelo, followed by the officer. It would be funny if they are chained together. Dromio would then feel in his pouch for the key. The merchant follows. Dromio is left, wondering at it all and what he shall do next. He is afraid to approach the house. He sees Adriana approach and hides in the L corner of the stage. The women go down R and R C. Adriana R C. Dromio keeps on bobbing behind the wing, afraid to come out. Adriana takes the stage R to L C and back to C; all through the scene, Luciana trying to appease her wrath.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Ant. E. How now! a madman! Why, thou peevish sheep.

What ship of Epidamnum stays for me?

Dro. S. A ship you sent me to, to hire waftage.

Ant. E. Thou drunken slave, I sent thee for a rope,

And told thee to what purpose and what end.

Dro. S. You sent me for a rope's end as soon: You sent me to the bay, sir, for a bark.

Ant. E. I will debate this matter at more leisure,

And teach your ears to list me with more heed.

To Adriana, villain, hie thee straight:

Give her this key, and tell her, in the desk

That's cover'd o'er with Turkish tapestry

There is a purse of ducats; let her send it:

Tell her I am arrested in the street,

And that shall bail me: hie thee, slave, be gone!

On, officer, to prison till it come.

[*Exeunt Sec. Merchant, Angelo, Officer, and*

Ant. E. off L¹.

Dro. S. To Adriana! that is where we dined,
Where Dowsabel did claim me for her husband:
She is too big, I hope, for me to compass.



THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Thither I must, although against my will,
For servants must their masters' minds fulfil.

[*Goes up L.*]

*Enter ADRIANA (2) and LUCIANA (1) from
House R.*

Adr. Ah, Luciana, did he tempt thee so?
Mightst thou perceive austerely in his eye
That he did plead in earnest? yea or no?

Look'd he red or pale, or sad or merrily?
What observation madest thou, in this case,
Of his heart's meteors tilting in his face?

Luc. First he denied you had in him no right.

Adr. He meant he did me none; the more my
spite.

Luc. Then swore he that he was a stranger
here.

Adr. And true he swore, though yet for-
sworn he were.

Luc. Then pleaded I for you.

Adr. And what said he?

Luc. That love I begg'd for you he begg'd
of me.

Adr. With what persuasion did he tempt thy
love?

¹*Adriana sinks on seat R C.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Luc. With words that in an honest suit might
move;

First he did praise my beauty, then my
speech.

Adr. Didst speak him fair?

Luc. Have patience, I beseech.

Adr. I cannot, nor I will not, hold me still;
My tongue, though not my heart, shall have
his will.

He is deformed, crooked, old, and sere,
Ill-faced, worse bodied, shapeless everywhere;
Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind;
Stigmatical in making, worse in mind.

Luc. Who would be jealous, then, of such a
one?

No evil lost is wail'd when it is gone.

*Adr.*¹ Ah, but I think him better than I say,
My heart prays for him, though my tongue
do curse.

Here DROMIO of Syracuse runs forward L C.

Dro. S. Here! go; the desk, the purse! sweet,
now, make haste.

Luc. (*Crosses to C.*) How hast thou lost thy
breath?

Dro. S. By running fast.

¹*Adriana, horrified, rises R C; Luciana is C; Dromio L C. The women look at each other in surprise.*

²*Dromio crosses to C; Luciana to L C.*

³*Luciana runs into house R.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Adr. Where is thy master, Dromio? is he well?

Dro. S. No he's in Tartar limbo, worse than hell.¹

A devil in an everlasting garment hath him;
One whose hard heart is button'd up with steel;
A fiend, a fury, pitiless and rough;
A wolf, nay, worse; a fellow all in buff;

Adr. Why, man, what is the matter?

*Dro. S.*² I do not know the matter: he is 'rested on the case.

Adr. What, is he arrested? Tell me at whose suit.

Dro. S. I know not at whose suit he is arrested well;

But he's in a suit of buff which 'rested him, that can I tell.

Will you send him, mistress, redemption, the money in his desk?

Adr. Go fetch it, sister. [*Exit Luciana.*³]
This I wonder at,

That he, unknown to me, should be in debt.
Tell me, was he arrested on a band?

Dro. S. Not a on band, but on a stronger thing;

¹*A distant bell strikes a deep "one."*

²*Luciana comes down R, gives purse to Adriana, who is C; she gives it to Dromio, who is L C*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

A chain, a chain! Do you not hear it ring?
[*Bell.*¹

Adr. What, the chain?

Dro. S. No, no, the bell: 'tis time that I
were gone:

It was two ere I left him, and now the clock
strikes one. ☾

Adr. The hours come back! that did I never
hear.

Dro. S. O, yes; if any hour meet a sergeant,
'a turns back for very fear.

Adr. As if Time were in debt! how fondly
dost thou reason!

Dro. S. Time is a very bankrupt, and owes
more than he's worth to season.

Nay, he's a thief too: have you not heard men say,
That Time comes stealing on by night and day?
If Time be in debt and theft, and a sergeant in
the way,

Hath he not reason to turn back an hour in a
day?

*Re-enter LUCIANA*² *with a purse from house R.*

Adr. Go, Dromio; there's the money, bear
it straight;
And bring thy master home immediately.

¹*Adriana turns to Luciana and they go up together to house R. Dromio runs off clutching purse, L. A short interval.*

It is a good thing to turn up lights in an auditorium and let the audience have a little chat for about two or three minutes. In this play this is a good point at which to do it.

²*Antipholus of Syracuse is a lighter character than his brother and takes this more humourously.*

³*Dromio is still slow and deliberate; his manner of coming on and making announcements should cause much laughter each time. His amazement at seeing the man he thought was arrested — so soon free — is laughable.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Come, sister.¹ I am press'd down with conceit, —

Conceit, my comfort and my injury.

[Exeunt up R.]

A short pause here.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse from L.

*Ant. S.*² There's not a man I meet but doth salute me

As if I were their well-acquainted friend;
And every one doth call me by my name.
Some tender money to me; some invite me;
Some other give me thanks for kindnesses;
Some offer me commodites to buy:
Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop,
And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,
And therewithal took measure of my body.
Sure, these are but imaginary wiles,
And Lapland sorcerers in habit here.

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse from L

*Dro. S. (L).*³ Master, here's the gold you sent me for.

What, have you got the picture of old Adam new-apparelled?

¹*Antipholus goes to L C ∩ Phryne enters up
L, crosses over behind to R C, as if she did not
want to startle Antipholus.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Ant. S. (C). What gold is this? what Adam dost thou mean?

Dro. S. (LC). Not that Adam that kept the Paradise,

But that Adam that keeps the prison: he that goes in the calf's skin that was killed for the Prodigal; he that came behind you, sir, like an evil angel, and bid you forsake your liberty.

Ant. S. I understand thee not.

Dro. S. No? why, 'tis a plain case.

Ant. S. What, thou meanest an officer?

Dro. S. Ay, sir, the sergeant of the band; he that brings any man to answer it that breaks his band; one that thinks a man always going to bed, and says, "God give you good rest!"

Ant. S. Well, sir, there rest in your foolery. Is there any ship puts forth to-night? may we be gone?

Dro. S. Why, sir, I brought you word an hour since that the bark *Expedition* put forth to-night; and then were you hindered by the sergeant, to tarry for the hoy *Delay*. Here are the angels that you sent for to deliver you.

Ant. S.¹ The fellow is distract, and so am I;

¹*Antipholus and Dromio both shrink into L corner.*

²*Phryne approaches them; they still shrink L.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

And here we wander in illusions:
Some blessed power deliver us from hence!

Enter PHRYNE from L U E, crosses to R C.

Phry. Well met, well met, Master Antipholus.
I see, sir, you have found the goldsmith now:
Is that the chain you promised me to-day?

*Ant. S.*¹ Satan, avoid! I charge thee, tempt
me not.

Dro. S. Master, is this Mistress Satan?

Ant. S. It is the devil.

Dro. S. Nay, she is worse, she is the devil's
dam; come not near her.

Phry. (R C). Your man and you are marvel-
lous merry, sir.

Will you go with me? We'll mend our dinner here?

Dro. S. (L). Master, if you do, expect spoon-
meat; or bespeak a long spoon.

Ant. S. (L C). Why, Dromio?

Dro, S. Marry, he must have a long spoon
that must eat with the devil.

*Ant. S.*² *(L C).* Avoid then, fiend! what
tell'st thou me of supping?

Thou art, as you are all, a sorceress:

I conjure thee to leave me and be gone.

¹*Antipholus repulses her.*

²*The two men both slope off up L as if they were really afraid.*

³*She stands watching them a moment.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Phry. (C). Give me the ring of mine you had
at dinner,

Or, for my diamond, the chain you promised,
And I'll be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

*Dro. S.*¹ (L C). Some devils ask but the
parings of one's nail,
A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin,
A nut, a cheery-stone;
But she, more covetous, would have a chain.
Master, be wise: and if you give it her,
The devil will shake her chain, and fright us
with it.

Phry. I pray you, sir, my ring, or else the
chain:

I hope you do not mean to cheat me so.

Ant. S. Avaunt, thou witch! Come, Dromio,
let us go.²

Dro. S. "Fly pride," says the peacock:
mistress, that you know.

[*Exeunt Ant. S. and Dro. S. up* 

*Phry.*³ Now, out of doubt Antipholus is mad,
Else would he never so demean himself.
A ring he hath of mine worth forty ducats,
And for the same he promised me a chain:
Both one and other he denies me now.

¹*She goes up to the house R.*

²*Antipholus comes on, followed closely by the red-haired officer; he almost treads on his heels as they march up and down.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

The reason that I gather he is mad,
Besides this present instance of his rage,
Is a mad tale he told to-day at dinner,
Of his own doors being shut against his entrance.

Belike his wife, acquainted with his fits,
On purpose shut the doors against his way.
My way is now to hie home to his house,¹
And tell his wife that, being lunatic,
He rush'd into my house, and took perforce

My ring away. This course I fittest choose;
For forty ducats is too much to lose.

[*Exit into house R.*

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus² *and the Officer from L.*

Ant. E. Fear me not, man; I will not break away:

I'll give thee, ere I leave thee, so much money,
To warrant thee, as I am 'rested for.
My wife is in a wayward mood to-day,
And will not lightly trust the messenger.
That I should be attach'd in Ephesus,
I tell you, 'twill sound harshly in her ears.

¹*Dromio rushes on at L flourishing and twirling a large rope about six feet long; the officer almost runs away.*

²*Antipholus takes rope and hits it hard on the ground, appearing to beat Dromio, who jumps every time; the officer follows around quietly, pleading with him.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

*Enter DROMIO of Ephesus,¹ with a rope's-end,
from L.*

Here comes my man; I think he brings the money.

How now, sir! have you that I sent you for?

Dro. E. (C). Here's that, I warrant you, will pay them all.

Ant. E. (C). But where's the money?

Dro. E. Why, sir, I gave the money for the rope.

Ant. E. Five hundred ducats, villain, for a rope?

Dro. E. I'll serve you, sir, five hundred at the rate.

Ant. E. To what end did I bid thee hie thee home?

Dro. E. To a rope's-end, sir; and to that end am I returned.

Ant. E.² And to that end, sir, I will welcome you. *[Beating him.]*

Off. Good sir, be patient.

Dro. E. Nay, 'tis for me to be patient; I am in adversity.

Off. Good now, hold thy tongue.

¹*They are just escaping when a group is seen at the door R, which slowly comes down the stage, Pinch, the quack doctor, first, with Adriana, Luciana and Phryne behind him, holding up his big cloak to hide themselves; Antipholus is L C; Dromio, hiding behind him L, shouts across the stage to Adriana. It appears now that every one on the stage is crazy. The merchant looks on in amazement from R.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Dro. E. Nay, rather persuade him to hold his hands.

Ant. E. Thou senseless villain!

Dro. E. I would I were senseless, sir, that I might not feel your blows.

Ant. E. Thou art sensible in nothing but blows, and so is an ass.

Dro. E. I am an ass, indeed; you may prove it by my long ears.

Ant. E. Come, go along; my wife is coming yonder.¹

Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, PHRYNE and PINCH.

Dro. E. (L). Mistress, "respice finem," respect your end or rather, the prophecy like the parrot, "beware the rope's-end."

Ant. E. (L C). Wilt thou still talk?

[*Beating him.*

Phry. (R). How say you now? is not your husband mad?

Adr. (R C). His incivility confirms no less.
Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer;
Establish him in his true sense again,
And I will please you what you will demand.

¹*Pinch is an eccentric part, eccentrically costumed in a tall conical or sugar-loaf hat, with black gown and gloves on. He darts out his hands as if mesmerizing his subject.*

²*Antipholus just boxes his ear, which naturally causes the quack to think he has a madman-subject; he quickly makes all sorts of strange passes with his hands. Dromio presently tries the experiment, to appease his master's disordered mind.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Luc. (R). Alas, how fiery and how sharp he looks!

Phry. Mark how he trembles in his ecstasy!

Pinch.¹ (C). Give me your hand, and let me feel your pulse. [*Gliding down stage.*]

Ant. E². There is my hand, and let it feel your ear. [*Striking him.*]

Pinch. I charge thee, Satan, housed within this man,

To yield possession to my holy prayers,
And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight:
I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven!

Ant. E. Peace, doting wizard, peace! I am not mad.

Adr. O, that thou wert not, poor distressed soul!

Ant. E. You minion, you, are these your customers?

Did this companion with the saffron face
Revel and feast it at my house to-day,
Whilst upon me the guilty doors were shut,
And I denied to enter in my house?

Adr. O husband, God doth know you dined at home;

Where would you had remain'd until this time,

¹*Poor Dromio has not dined at all and he signifies the fact.*

²*The women are still behind Pinch's cloak.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Free from these slanders and this open shame!

Ant. E. Dined at home! Thou villain, what sayest thou?

*Dro. E.*¹ (*L*). Sir, sooth to say, you did not dine at home.

Ant. E. (*L*). Were not my doors lock'd and I shut out?

Dro. E. Perdie, your doors were lock'd and you shut out.

Ant. E. (*L C*). And did not she herself revile me there?

Dro. E. (*L*). Sans fable, she herself reviled you there.

Ant. E. (*L C*). Did not her kitchen-maid rail, taunt, and scorn me?

Dro. E. Certes, she did; the kitchen-vestal scorned you.

Ant. E. And did not I in rage depart from thence?

Dro. E. In verity you did; my bones bear witness,

That since have felt the vigour of his rage.

Adr. Is't good to soothe him in these contraries?²

¹*Dromio almost shakes his head off emphasizing the fact that he hasn't seen any money.*

²*Dromio holds his hands and the rope up as if appealing to heaven.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Pinch. It is no shame: the fellow finds his
vein,

And, yielding to him, humours well his frenzy.

Ant. E. Thou hast suborn'd the goldsmith
to arrest me.

Adr. Alas, I sent you money to redeem you,
By Dromio here, who came in haste for it.

Dro. E.¹ Money by me! heart and good-will
you might;

But surely, master, not a rag of money.

Ant. E. Went'st not thou to her for a purse
of ducats?

Adr. He came to me, and I deliver'd it.

Luc. And I am witness with her that she did.

Dro. E.² God and the rope-maker bear me
witness

That I was sent for nothing but a rope!

Pinch. Mistress, both man and master is
possess'd;

I know it by their pale and deadly looks:

They must be bound, and laid in some dark
room.

Ant. E. Say, wherefore didst thou lock me
forth to-day?

And why dost thou deny the bag of gold?

¹Here the officer who has been looking on in a frightened state goes up L and beckons on four other soldiers; they come on with ropes and stand up L.

²Two rush at Antipholus and bind him; two rush at Dromio and bind him.

³Pinch holds his hands up all the time as if controlling the power over the situation; Adriana weeps on the seat R C, consoled by Luciana.

⁴Dromio is resigned to the situation; Antipholus does not like it; he struggles with the officers. Dromio is carried off by the other two and in going up he catches the Doctor between his knees and runs him off the stage up R C. The officer remains behind, so that when Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio rush in they all, including the officer, scream and disperse all over the stage, for they think the madmen have broken loose. They all rush into the house R.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Adr. I did not, gentle husband, lock thee forth.

Dro. E. And, gentle master, I received no gold;

But I confess, sir, that we were lock'd out.

Adr. Dissembling villain, thou speak'st false in both.

*Ant. E.*¹ Dissembling woman, thou art false in all,

And art confederate with a wretched pack

To make a loathsome abject scorn of me:

But with these nails I'll pluck out these false eyes.

That would behold in me this shameful sport.

*Enter three or four and offer to bind him.*² *He strives.*

Adv. O most unhappy day!³

Ant. E. O most unhappy woman.

*Dro. E.*⁴ Master, I am here enter'd in bond for you.

Ant. E. Out on thee, villain! wherefore dost thou mad me?

Dro. E. Will you be bound for nothing? be mad, good master: cry, The devil!

¹*There is a great noise off L.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Luc. God help, poor souls, how idly do they talk!

Adr. Go bear him hence. Sister, go you with me.

[Exeunt all but ADRIANA, LUCIANA, Officers and PHRYNE.]

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse with his rapier drawn, and Dromio of Syracuse from Noise off L.¹

Luc. God, for thy mercy! they are loose again.

Adr. And come with naked swords.

Let's call more help to have them bound again.

Off. Away! they'll kill us.

[Exeunt all but ANT. S. and DRO. S.]

Ant. S. (C). I see these witches are afraid of swords.

Dro. S. (L). She that would be your wife now ran from you.

Ant. S. Come to the Centaur; fetch our stuff from thence:

I long that we were safe and sound aboard.

Dro. S. Faith, stay here this night; they will surely do us no harm: you saw they speak us

¹*This line is very humorous after all the rough treatment, and should get a good laugh.*

²*Antipholus goes up to L. After his exit Dromio goes cautiously over to house, shakes his head, and runs off after his master.*

At this point is the last short interval — a little music suggestive of sorrow — as a prelude to Ægeon's scene.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

fair, give us gold: *methinks they are such a gentle nation*,¹ that, but for the mountain of mad flesh that claims marriage of me, I could find in my heart to stay here still, and turn witch.

*Ant. S.*² I will not stay to-night for all the town;

Therefore away, to get our stuff aboard.

[*Exeunt up L.*

Note.—In describing the scene as “the same,” it is left to the discretion of the manager whether the scenes be changed or not. If there is scenery available, by all means have it used unless it is ugly and “dauby,” which is the case with much of it. A little play like this should be carefully and artistically dressed and mounted, and one well got up scene is preferable to half a dozen bad attempts. The Elizabethan setting is particularly well adapted to the play, the canopy, balcony, and side doors supplying every point that is necessary for its swift representation. The positions and stage business here described can just as easily be adapted. The costumes, however, should be strictly “Elizabethan.” The best record of the play is that given at Gray’s Inn, where conditions would have been similar to such a representation.

ACT III

SCENE I. *Street before Priory (or the same.)*

Enter Second Merchant (1) *and* ANGELO (2).

Ang. C. I am sorry, sir, that I have hinder'd
you;

But, I protest, he had the chain of me,
Though most dishonestly he doth deny it.

Sec. Mer. (R C). How is the man esteem'd
here in the city?

Ang. Of very reverent reputation, sir,
Of credit infinite, highly beloved,
Second to none that lives here in the city:
His word might bear my wealth at any time.

Sec. Mer. Speak softly, yonder, as I think,
he walks. *[They go down R C.]*

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse *and* DROMIO of
Syracuse *from L.*

Ang. 'Tis so; and that self chain about his
neck,

¹*Antipholus and Dromio are L C and L, Dromio wondering what will happen to them next.*

²*Merchant crosses to R C; Angelo R.*

³*Antipholus gets angry here just like his brother. Up to this point we have only seen him in the lighter vein.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Which he forswore most monstrously to have.
Good sir, draw near to me, I'll speak to him;
Signior Antipholus, I wonder much
That you would put me to this shame and
trouble;

And, not without some scandal to yourself,
With circumstance and oath so to deny¹
This chain which now you wear so openly:
Beside the charge, the shame, imprisonment,
You have done wrong to this my honest friend;
Who, but for staying on our controversy,
Had hoisted sail and put to sea to-day:
This chain you had of me; can you deny it?

Ant. S. (C). I think I had; I never did deny
it.

Sec. Mer.² (R C). Yes, that you did, sir,
and forswore it too.

Ant. S. Who heard me to deny it or for-
swear it?

Sec. Mer. These ears of mine, thou know'st,
did hear thee.

Fie on thee, wretch! 'tis pity that thou livest
To walk where any honest men resort.

Ant. S.³ Thou art a villain to impeach me
thus:

At the height of the quarrel the women return from the house with attendants. This scene should be full of bustle and action. Angelo crosses to L; the merchant crosses to C R; Antipholus to C L; swords cross in the middle of the fight of a few quick passes; the women come on and make a great noise. When Dromio sees they are likely to be overpowered and bound he rushes up C to the convent; he knocks violently at door (if possible). The abbess appears and they run inside. The abbess and two attendants block the way from others entering.

¹*The abbess should be garbed in black and gray worn Greek style.*

²*Adriana and the woman are on R side; the merchant goes back R; Angelo stays L.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

I'll prove mine honour and mine honesty
Against thee presently, if thou darest stand.

Sec. Mer. (Crosses to C). I dare, and do defy
thee for a villain. *[They draw.]*

Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, PHRYNE and others.

Adr. Hold, hurt him not, for God's sake!
he is mad.

Some get within him, take his sword away:
Bind Dromio too, and bear them to my house.

Dro. S. Run, master, run; for God's sake,
take a house!

This is some priory. In, or we are spoil'd!
[Exeunt ANT. S. and DRO. S. to the Priory.]

Enter the LADY ABBESS.¹

Abb. (C). Be quiet, people. Wherefore
throng you hither?

Adr.² (R C). To fetch my poor distracted
husband hence.

Let us come in, that we may bind him fast,
And bear him home for his recovery.

Ang. (L). I knew he was not in his perfect
wits.

Sec. Mer. (R). I am sorry now that I did
draw on him.

¹*The manner in which the abbess leads Adriana on to betray herself is extremely clever.*

²*Their voices rise above one another, Adriana with her shrewish manner, The abbess with a kindly reproof.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Abb. How long hath this possession held the man?

Adr. This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad,

And much different from the man he was;
But till this afternoon his passion
Ne'er brake into extremity of rage.

Abb. Hath he not lost much wealth by wreck of sea?

Buried some dear friend? Hath not else his eye

Stray'd his affection in unlawful love?

*Adr.*¹ To none of these, except it be the last; namely, some love that drew him oft from home.

Abb. You should for that have reprehended him.

Adr. Why, so I did.

Abb. Ay, but not rough enough.

Adr. As roughly as my modesty would let me.

Abb. Haply, in private.

*Adr.*² And in assemblies too.

*Abb.*² Ay, but not enough.

Adr. It was the copy of our conference:
In bed, he slept not for my urging it;

¹*This is the climax and should be effective.*

²*Adriana shows herself in a rather bad light here.*

³*The abbess shows her sense and her dignity.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

At board, he fed not for my urging it;
Alone, it was the subject of my theme;
In company I often glanced it;
Still did I tell him it was vile and bad.

*Abb.*¹ And thereof came it that the man
was mad.

The venom clamours of a jealous woman
Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.
The consequence is, then, thy jealous fits
Have scared thy husband from the use of wits.

Luc. She never reprehended him but mildly,
When he demean'd himself rough, rude, and
wildly.

Why bear you these rebukes, and answer not?

*Adr.*² She did betray me to my own reproof.
Good people, enter, and lay hold on him.

*Abb.*³ No, not a creature enters in my house.

Adr. Then let your servants bring my hus-
band forth.

Abb. Neither: he took his place for sanctuary,
And it shall privilege him from your hands
Till I have brought him to his wits again,
Or lose my labour in assaying it.

Adr. I will attend my husband, be his nurse,
Diet his sickness, for it is my office,

¹*The abbess turns and quietly goes into the abbey between her two attendants, the door or curtain closing behind her.*

²*Adriana once more sinks exhausted on the seat*
R C.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

And will have no attorney but myself;
And therefore let me have him home with me.

Abb. Be patient; for I will not let him stir
Till I have used the approved means I have,
With wholesome syrups, drugs and holy prayers,
To make of him a formal man again:
It is a branch and parcel of mine oath,
A charitable duty of my order.

Therefore depart, and leave him here with me.

Adr. I will not hence, and leave my husband
here:

And ill it doth beseem your holiness
To separate the husband and the wife.

*Abb.*¹ Be quiet, and depart: thou shalt not
have him. *[Exit.*

Luc. (R). Complain unto the Duke of this indignity.

*Adr.*² *(R C).* Come, go: I will fall prostrate
at his feet,

And never rise until my tears and prayers
Have won his Grace to come in person hither,
And take perforce my husband from the abbess.

Sec. Mer. (R). By this, I think, the dial points
at five:

Anon, I'm sure, the Duke himself in person



¹The bell or gong begins tolling again off L.

²The Duke comes first, followed by two soldiers, then Ægeon, and two more soldiers. The Headsman can be one of the soldiers who carries a sword.

³Adriana and Luciana kneel R C.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Comes this way to the melancholy vale,
The place of death and sorry execution,
Behind the ditches of the abbey here.

*Ang.*¹ *L.* Upon what cause?

Sec. Mer. To see a reverend Syracusian merchant,
Who put unluckily into this bay

Against the laws and statutes of this town,
Beheaded publicly for his offence.

Ang. See where they come: we will behold
his death.

Luc. Kneel to the Duke before he pass the
abbey.

*Enter DUKE,*² *attended; ÆGEON bareheaded; with
the Headsman and other Officers.*

Duke C. Yet once again proclaim it publicly,
If any friend will pay the sum for him,
He shall not die; so much we tender him.

*Adr.*³ Justice, most sacred Duke, against the
abbess!

Duke. She is a virtuous and a reverend lady:
It cannot be that she hath done thee wrong.

Adr. May it please your Grace, Antipholus
my husband —

¹*Long not lawng.*

²*One of the attendants or soldiers goes to the abbey.*

There can, of course, be more or less attendants than here specified.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Whom I made lord of me and all I had,
At your important letters — this ill day
A most outrageous fit of madness took him;
That desperately he hurried through the street—
With him his bondman, all as mad as he —
Doing displeasure to the citizens
By rushing in their houses, bearing thence
Rings, jewels, any thing his rage did like.
Once did I get him bound, and sent him home,
Then they fled into this abbey, whither we pursued them;

And here the abbess shuts the gates on us,
And will not suffer us to fetch him out,
Nor send him forth, that we may bear him hence.
Therefore, most gracious Duke, with thy command

Let him be brought forth, and borne hence for help.

Duke. (C). Long¹ since thy husband served
me in my wars;

And I to thee engaged a prince's word,
When thou didst make him master of thy bed,
To do him all the grace and good I could.
Go, some of you, knock at the abbey-gate,
And bid the lady abbess come to me.
I will determine this before I stir.²

²*There is a great noise off R; then Antipholus rushes on, followed by Dromio, who goes to L; they both kneel.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

*Adr.*¹ Even now we housed him in the abbey
here;

And now he's there, past thought of human
reason.

*Enter R. ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and DROMIO
of Ephesus.*

Ant. E. (C). Justice, most gracious Duke,
O, grant me justice!

Even for the service that long since I did thee,
When I bestrid thee in the wars, and took
Deep scars to save thy life; even for the blood
That then I lost for thee, now grant me justice.

Æge. Unless the fear of death doth make me
dote,

I see my son Antipholus, and Dromio.

Ant. E. Justice, sweet prince, against that
woman there!

She whom thou gavest to me to be my wife,
That hath abused and dishonour'd me
Even in the strength and height of injury:
Beyond imagination is the wrong
That she this day hath shameless thrown on me.

Duke. Discover how, and thou shalt find
me just.

¹*Antipholus rises and speaks from C; Duke is R C on seat; the women gathered around down and up R; Antipholus points to each person as he mentions them; they acknowledge or deny by shake or nod of head. Dromio sits on the ground L of his master.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Ant. E. This day, great Duke, she shut the
doors upon me,
While she with strangers feasted in my house.

Duke. A grievous fault! Say, woman, did'st
thou so?

Adr. No, my good lord: myself, he and
my sister

To-day did dine together. So befall my soul
As this is false he burthens me withal!

*Ant. E.*¹ My liege, I am advised what I say;
Neither disturbed with the effect of wine,
Nor heady-rash, provoked with raging ire,
Albeit my wrongs might make one wiser mad.
This woman lock'd me out this day from dinner:
That goldsmith there, were he not pack'd with
her,

Could witness it, for he was with me then;
Who parted with me to go fetch a chain,
Promising to bring it to the Porpentine,
Where Balthazar and I did dine together.
Our dinner done, and he not coming thither,
I went to seek him: in the street I met him,
And in his company that gentleman.
There did this perjured goldsmith swear me
down

¹*Dromio expresses by a decided shake of the head that he has not had the money.*

²*He kneels again.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

That I this day of him received the chain,
Which, God he knows, I saw not: for the which
He did arrest me with an officer.

I did obey; and sent my peasant home
For certain ducats:¹ he with none return'd.

Then fairly I bespoke the officer

To go in person with me to my house.

By the way we met my wife, her sister, and a
rabble more

Of vile confederates. Along with them
They brought one Pinch, this pernicious slave,
Forsooth, took on him as a conjurer;

And, gazing in mine eyes, feeling my pulse,

And with no face, as 'twere, outfacing me,

Cries out, I was possess'd. Then all together

They fell upon me, bound me, bore me thence,

And in a dark and dankish vault at home

There left me and my man, both bound together;

Till, gnawing with my teeth my bonds in sunder,

I gain'd my freedom, and immediately

Ran hither to your Grace, whom I beseech²

To give me ample satisfaction

For these deep shames and great indignities.

Ang. (L). My lord, in truth, thus far I witness with him,

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

That he dined not at home, but was lock'd out.

Duke. But had he such a chain of thee or no?

Ang. (L). He had, my lord: and when he ran
in here,

These people saw the chain about his neck.

Sec. Mer. (R). Besides, I will be sworn these
ears of mine

Heard you confess you had the chain of him,

After you first forswore it on the mart:

And thereupon I drew my sword on you;

And then you fled into this abbey here,

From whence, I think, you are come by miracle.

Ant. E. I never came within these abbey-
walls;

Nor ever didst thou draw thy sword on me:

I never saw the chain, so help me Heaven!

And this is false you burthen me withal.

Duke. Why, what an intricate impeach is
this!

I think you all have drunk of Circe's cup.

If here you housed him, here he would have been;

If he were mad, he would not plead so coldly:

You say he dined at home; the goldsmith
here

Denies that saying. Sirrah, what say you?

¹*He points across to Phryne, who is at the extreme K, she acknowledges it.*

²*Curtseying.*

³*Duke rises; Antipholus goes to L C.*

⁴*Poor old Ægeon has stood by longing to speak.*

⁵*The officers bring him down to C. Dromio kneels by his master L; both of them are amazed at the old man's words.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Dro. E. Sir, he dined with her there, at the
Porpentine.¹

Phry. (R). He did; and from my finger
snatch'd that ring.

Ant. E. (C). 'Tis true, my liege; this ring I
had of her.

Duke. Saw'st thou him enter at the abbey
here?

*Phry.*² As sure, my liege, as I do see your
Grace.

*Duke.*³ Why, this is strange. Go call the
abbess hither.

I think you are all mated, or stark mad.

(Crosses to R C.)

[Exit one to the abbess.]

*Æge.*⁴ Most mighty Duke, vouchsafe me
speak a word:

Haply I see a friend will save my life,
And pay the sum that may deliver me.

Duke. Speak freely, Syracusian, what thou
wilt.

*Æge.*⁵ Is not your name, sir, call'd Antipholus?
And is not that your bondman, Dromio?

Dro. E. Within this hour I was his bond-
man, sir,

Note.— *The lines of Dromio are better omitted, as an audience always laughs at any simply expressed sentiment by a comical character. It is the same with eating on the stage. It is hardly ever received seriously, because we — all of us — do it so often in ordinary life.*

In this particular situation all is so heart-stirring that it would be wrong to raise any laughter. The old man's plight and the tardy realization of his life's dream — to find, and be reunited to his wife and sons — make one of the most poignant situations in drama. Note once more the masterly stage construction of this last scene.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

But he, I thank him, gnaw'd in two my cords:
Now am I Dromio, and his man unbound.

Æge. I am sure you both of you remember
me.

Æge. (C). Why look you strange on me?
you know me well.

Ant. E. I never saw you in my life till now.

Æge. (C). O, grief hath changed me since you
saw me last,

And careful hours with time's deformed hand
Have written strange defeatures in my face:
But tell me yet, dost thou not know my voice?

Ant. E. Neither.

Æge. Dromio, nor thou?

Dro. E. No, trust me, sir, nor I.

Æge. I am sure thou dost.

Not know my voice! O time's extremity,
Hast thou so crack'd and splitted my poor
tongue

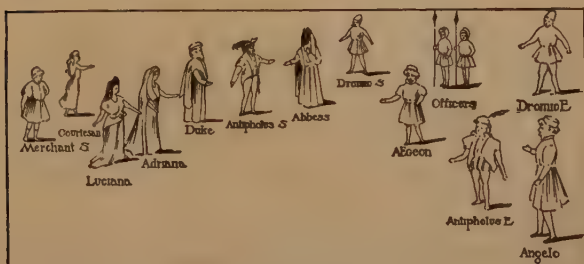
In seven short years, that here my only son
Knows not my feeble key of untuned cares?
Tell me thou art my son Antipholus.

Ant. E. I never saw my father in my life.

Æge. But seven years since, in Syracuse,
boy,

¹*Antipholus and Dromio here go to the extreme L of the stage so that when the other brothers come on they will all be at a fair distance from each other; Ægeon is lead a little to the L.*

²*The Abbess comes out of her house, leading Antipholus Syracuse on her R. The picture is held for a moment.*



³*The brothers stare in amazement at each other, so do the parents; Syracuse embraces his father; Dromio commences to cheer him and undo his cords; the abbess and Ægeon stand still until the time for loosening the bonds; then she helps.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Thou know'st we parted: but perhaps, my son,
Thou shamest to acknowledge me in misery.

*Ant. E.*¹ The Duke and all that know me
in the city

Can witness with me that it is not so:
I ne'er saw Syracuse in my life.

Duke. I tell thee, Syracusan, twenty years
Have I been patron to Antipholus,
During which time he ne'er saw Syracuse:
I see thy age and dangers make thee dote.

*Re-enter ABBESS,*² *with ANTIPHOLUS of Syra-*
cuse and DROMIO of Syracuse.

Abb. Most mighty Duke, behold a man
much wrong'd. [*All gather to see them.*

Adr. I see two husbands, or mine eyes de-
ceive me.

Duke. One of these men is Genius to the
other³;

And so of these. Which is the natural man,
And which the spirit? who deciphers them?

Dro. S. I, sir, am Dromio: command him
away.

Dro. E. I, sir, am Dromio; pray, let me stay.

Ant. S. Ægeon art thou not? or else his
ghost?

Note.—The poignancy of this scene must be preserved till the end as far as the Ægeon family is concerned.

¹At the mention of their names they all embrace, but seriously.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Dro. S. O, my old master! who hath bound
him here?

Abb. Whoever bound him, I will loose his
bonds,

And gain a husband by his liberty.

Speak, old Ægeon, if thou be'st the man

That hadst a wife once call'd Æmilia,

That bore thee at a burthen two fair sons:

O, if thou be'st the same Ægeon, speak,

And speak unto the same Æmilia!

Æge. If I dream not, thou art Æmilia:

If thou art she, tell me, where is that son

That floated with thee on the fatal raft?

Abb. By men of Epidamnum he and I

And the twin Dromio, all were taken up;

But by and by rude fishermen of Corinth

By force took Dromio and my son from them,

And me they left with those of Epidamnum.

What then became of them I cannot tell;

I to this fortune that you see me in.

*Duke.*¹ Why, here begins his morning story
right:

These two Antipholuses, these two so like,

And these two Dromios, one in semblance —

Besides her urging of her wreck at sea —

¹*The Duke speaks to Ephesus and when he finds his mistake he uses a wide flourish of the hands to keep them apart.*

²*Æmilia and Ægeon go up C conversing.*

³*The two brothers are talking together L C when Adriana rather cautiously comes across.*

⁴*She throws her arms around the wrong man; Ephesus playfully puts Syracuse over and comes between.*

⁵*Syracuse crosses over to R to Luciana.*

⁶*After deliberation Angelo crosses to C; after the reply he shakes head, laughs, and goes back to L.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

These are the parents to these children,
Which accidentally are met together.

Antipholus, thou camest from Corinth first?

Ant. S. No, sir, not I; I came from Syracuse.

Duke.¹ Stay, stand apart; I know not which
is which.

Ant. E. I came from Corinth, my most
gracious lord —

Dro. E. And I with him.

Ant. E. Brought to this town by that most
famous warrior, Duke Menaphon, your most
renowned uncle.²

Adr.³ Which of you two did dine with me
to-day?

Ant. S. I, gentle mistress.

Adr.⁴ And are not you my husband?

Ant. E. No, I say nay to that.

Ant. S. And so do I; yet she did call me so:
And this fair gentlewoman, her sister here,⁵
Did call me brother. [*Crosses to Luciana.*] What
I told you then,

I hope I shall have leisure to make good;
If this be not a dream I see and hear.

Ang.⁶ That is the chain, sir, which you had
of me.

¹*Be careful to keep the positions, as the end of the play is difficult, owing to several movements.*

²*Dromio violently shakes his head; he has been accused of all sorts of things during the play.*

³*He throws the bag of money to Ephesus.*

⁴*Who holds them up to free his father.*

⁵*He now throws the bag to the Dromios, who dance with delight.*

⁶*Adriana is talking to the Dromios, when Phryne comes over from R to talk to Antipholus; he takes off the ring and gives it to her; Adriana turns at this moment and runs after her; they fight it out up stage L; Phryne escapes; Adriana and Antipholus are reconciled.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Ant. S. I think it be, sir; I deny it not.

*Ant. E.*¹ And you, sir, for this chain arrested me.

Ang. I think I did, sir; I deny it not.

Adr. I sent you money, sir, to be your bail,
By Dromio; but I think he brought it not.

*Dro. E.*² No, none by me.

Ant. S. This purse of ducats I received from
you,

And Dromio my man did bring them me.

I see we still did meet each other's man;

And I was ta'en for him, and he for me;

And thereupon these *errors* are arose.³

*Ant. E.*⁴ These ducats pawn I for my father
here.

Duke. It shall not need; thy father hath his
life.⁵ ☹

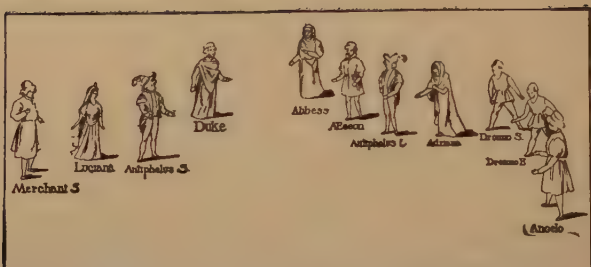
*Phry.*⁶ Sir, I must have that diamond from
you.

Ant. E. There, take it; and much thanks
for my good cheer. ☹

Abb. (C). Renowned Duke, vouchsafe to take
the pains

To go with us into the abbey here,

And hear at large discoursed all our fortunes:



The "Disposition" of the Characters Must Be Very Carefully Arranged. Hence This Diagram

¹*Æmilia* curtseys to Duke, then gives her left hand to Ægeon; the two sons go forward and kneel; the two Dromios plump down on their knees, resuming their previous positions as Duke moves up C.

²The Duke takes Æmilia's right hand and Ægeon her left and they go off up C into house.

³The two Dromios talk together; the two Antipholuses also; when Dromio speaks at the words "embrace thy brother," they do so. At the same time Syracuse has hold of Adriana and Ephesus of Luciana. They discover their mistakes, all embrace again and go off into abbey, laughing and very happy.

⁴The Dromios go up after them. Stand with backs to audience, shake with laughter, then talk together.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

And all that are assembled in this place,
That by this sympathized one day's error
Have suffer'd wrong, go keep us company,
And we shall make full satisfaction.
The Duke, my husband, and my children both,¹
And you the calendars of their nativity,
Go to a gossips' feast, and go with me;
After so long grief, such nativity!

*Duke.*² With all my heart, I'll gossip at this
feast. ☾

[*Exeunt all but* ANT. S., ANT. E., DRO. S.,
and DRO. E.]

Dro. S. Master, shall I fetch your stuff
from ship-board?

Ant. E. Dromio, what stuff of mine hast
thou embark'd?

*Dro. S.*³ Your goods that lay at host, sir,
in the Centaur.

Ant. S. He speaks to me. I am your master,
Dromio:

Come, go with us; we'll look to that anon:

Embrace thy brother there; rejoice with him.

[*Exeunt* ANT. S. and ANT. E. ☾]

*Dro. S.*⁴ (R). There is a fat friend at your
master's house

¹*They may have a little dance together and then dance off, very much pleased with one another, into abbey.*

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

That kitchen'd me for you to-day at dinner:
She now shall be my sister, not my wife.

Dro. E. (L). Methinks you are my glass,
and not my brother:

I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth.

Will you walk in to see their gossiping?

Dro. S. Not I, sir; you are my elder.

Dro. E. That's a question: how shall we
try it?

Dro. S. We'll draw cuts for the senior: till
then lead thou first.

Dro. E. Nay, then, thus:

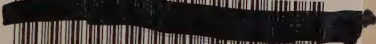
We came into the world like brother and brother;
And now let's go hand in hand, not one before
another. *[Exeunt.¹*

THE END



THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS
GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

11.

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING


U18101 267 207 5



